

W9/12/6 (20) 10f3

Hobart. 17 July 1891
Friday evening.

Dearest Bird,

I want to take Bernard
out to Bridgewater tomorrow,
and therefore I must write to you
to night as I may not be back
in time for the mail tomorrow
evening. It will be but a short
screed.

Your letter came to hand
this morning. We were all
delighted to find you had
made up your mind to go to
Britanny. We should have
been prieved if you had not gone,
and you have our best wishes
for your enjoying yourself. Of
course we shall expect you
to send us some sketches.

I went round to R M Johnston's
this evening to get some information

and of course he has been holding
forth all the time so that I
could not get away. Result -
it was 12:30 before I got home.

I am glad to say that poor
little Mary Stephens is better
to day. On Friday & Saturday
the doctors had no hopes of
her, but she took a turn for the
better at the beginning of the
week, & there seems to be just
a chance of possibility of her
recovering. I am not very
saupine myself about her.
Poor old Stephens looks like
a troubled ghost. I am very
sorry for him - He takes most
despondent views.

Lizzie went off to day by
the express for Swansea,
with Harry & Kate. Dick also
went. He stopped the cab to get

some lollies for the children, & they reached the station just as the doors were being shut. Dick wasn't in the least put out, though Harry & Kate had grown them up, but walked calmly to the carriage as if he had had half an hour to spare. It reminds me of Alice, & Mrs Hatch, who are always late & always calm. I am very glad Liz has got a holiday. It is years since she had one. She goes to stay with Lizzie Lyne for a fortnight, but you know her way, and I should not be surprised if she stays a month or more.

Ida Lewis was married on Saturday, (I think) It poured with rain the whole day. Last week the weather was simply awful. Not muggy weather

I need beyond compare, but the last few days we have had sharp frosts and lovely weather.

The floods have been out in the north. The worst damage to the line has been near Carleton, on the approaches to the South Esk Bridge, always a weak point. For several days they had to take the passengers round the obstruction by coach, but I believe the line is quite repaired now & the trains will run as usual.

No doubt you will want to know how things are going at the office. Mitchell has fixed up things most satisfactorily; and Young now, so far from insisting on our leaving the office (which I always knew he could not compel) is trying to find

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offices for himself. But this is not easy at present. There are no offices to be had, and it is also said that there are no houses empty in Hobart, but lots of people looking for houses & unable to find them. Young has been quite friendly & I hope our Solicitors will be able to settle matters and wind up the business in an amicable fashion. Every day convinces me that the course I have taken was the only wise one. One of my friends, a cute business man, says it is the wisest thing I have ever done in my life - and all my friends agree more or less emphatically. There is little doubt that altho' we may

have a hard struggle at first,
Wolffhagen & I will improve
our positions in the long run.
I don't think that Russell
his son will be able to keep
a business together. I have
not told any one here, & don't
wish to say a word against
Tom to injure him, but I
have been told that, even
since he has been back,
& with every possible reason
to keep straight; he has been
on the spree. I am in the
predicament I should have
been in if I had agreed
to take him into partnership.
He would have done the
business no end of harm.
As it is there is little doubt
that W. & I will keep a fair
proportion of the clients, &

as our expenses will be lightened
we shall both work, our
pecuniary position ought to
be as good as in the old
firm. On the whole I feel
the change to be a relief, and
am fairly hopeful for the
future. For years past I have
felt the explosion was
liable to take place, & it is
just as well to know the
worst, & to feel that it has
happened before one got too
old for work, & when ^{one} could
fairly hope to make a business
again & keep it together.

Dawson is going to Dobson
& Mitchell, where he will
get a salary bigger than we
could afford to pay him.
He has been & will be of the
greatest use in winding up

the old firm. Indeed, I don't
know what we should have
done without him. It is a
great pity he is going away.

I intend to go out to the
Hugheses at Bridgewater to-
morrow, taking Bernard with
me. He has never been in a
train before, & I expect to have
great amusement in his
delight. The Hugheses are
going to England in Feb.
& I will get them to look
you up. Hughes has come
in for a lot of money. But
poor fellow, he has heart
disease. For myself, I would
rather be without the money
and without the heart disease,
I dare say he would also.

By the way Dawson's agreement
is broken off. This is confidential.

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The new firm will be "I.B. Halker & Holfhagen". This will distinguish me from other Halkers, and most people know me as "I.B." or sometimes as "Old I.B.". It is nearly time I got the last designation. As you know, I will be 50 in October. However, I am glad to say that, altho' I may be old, I have not been in such good health for years past.

I will try to send you next time some photos of the Maatsuyker Islands, away off the South Coast of Tasmania. I think I told you some time ago of my trip to the opening of the lighthouse.

Maatsuyker is one of the
names old Abel Tasman
left on the coast 250 years
ago. You will be glad to
hear that my mining specs
look fairly well. I have about
£300 in shares & I hope there
is a chance of making a fair
profit. However I am not
very sanguine & if I get my
money back, shall not be
greatly disappointed.

It is nearly 2 o'clock and
I must be down to the office
soon after 4, so I had better
go to bed.